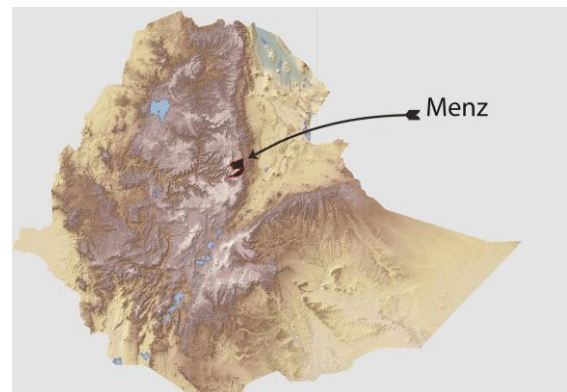


Food safety and animal health in the Menz sheep meat value chain, Ethiopia



Background

Menz District is a highland region in Central Ethiopia. Most inhabitants are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Therefore sheep production and sales are influenced by national and religious holidays. The three main lambing periods are in December to January, April to June and November. The predominant production system is mixed crops and livestock.



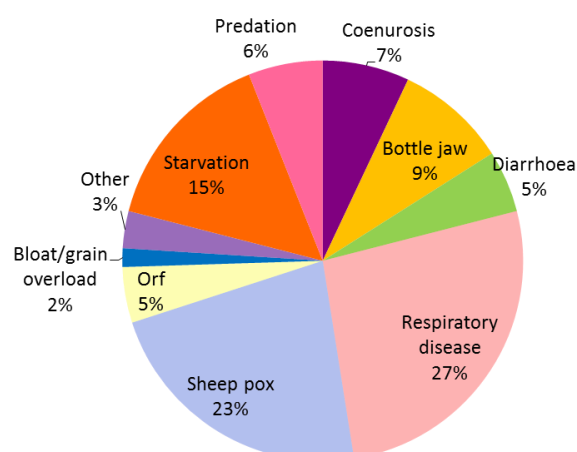
Value chain challenges

Diseases and starvation (feed shortage) are the main meat production constraints (Figure 1). Religion plays a role as well. Sale of meat is therefore limited by fasting periods (some 70% of the year) when meat consumption is forbidden. This leads to demand peaks in April, September until October and December and January. Limitations in cash availability very much influences the amount of meat consumed (for Protestants as well as orthodox).

Livestock mortality

The main reason given for livestock deaths is disease. This is exacerbated by the poor nutritional status of the livestock. Climate variability also adds to restricted feed availability. Veterinary services are said to be mostly absent, faulty or insufficient.

Figure 1: Reasons for livestock mortality



Future goals

During the value chain assessment process and subsequent discussions (early 2013), stakeholders from the district identified the following vision for their part of the small ruminant value chain development program in Ethiopia: *By 2020, to have increased income and consumption of quality sheep meat of all VC actors through an effective and sustainable Menz sheep value chain.*

Food safety

Menz people care for food safety. They have some knowledge they use to mitigate foodborne zoonoses. Some observations include:

- Meat is usually consumed quickly after slaughter or preserved. But there are reports of emergency slaughter of diseased animals followed by their consumption.
- Dark or foul-smelling meat is not consumed.
- Meat that is considered risky is usually boiled. Dulet (consisting of lamb tripe and liver) is usually consumed raw or very lightly cooked.

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Contact

Kristina Rösel (Project coordinator)

k.roesel@cgiar.org

<http://safefoodfairfood.ilri.org>



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PROGRAM ON
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für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

ilri.org

Better lives through livestock

ILRI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium

Box 30709, Nairobi 00100, Kenya
Phone: + 254 20 422 3000
Fax: +254 20 422 3001
Email: ILRI-Kenya@cgiar.org

Box 5689, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Phone: +251 11 617 2000
Fax: +251 11 617 2001
Email: ILRI-Ethiopia@cgiar.org



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